

Not only could CICIG go a long way in fulfilling the government's commitment under the peace accords to combat illegal armed groups, it could also help to uncover the full extent of these groups and dismantle their underlying structure. Most importantly, it would be an unprecedented step in ending the impunity that has been the greatest impediment to establishing the rule of law in Guatemala.

At this point, the future of CICIG is in the hands of the Guatemalan Congress, and with new elections approaching time is running out. It would be a terrible waste of years of hard work by the Guatemalan Government and the United Nations if the CICIG is not approved. Whether for prospective foreign investors or the surviving families of victims of political violence, nothing is more important than knowing the truth and seeing that justice is finally possible.

On June 28, the Senate Appropriations Committee, like the House of Representatives last month, unanimously reported the fiscal year 2008 foreign aid appropriations bill. That legislation would authorize the resumption of assistance for the Guatemalan Air Force, Navy and Army Corps of Engineers, if they are respecting human rights and the Guatemalan Congress ratifies the CICIG agreement.

I urge the Guatemalan Congress to seize this historic opportunity. The alternative, which is almost unthinkable, of rejecting this essential step to uphold the rule of law, would send a chilling message that it is the forces of crime and violence who will determine Guatemala's future. That is not an outcome that Guatemala or its people can afford.

TRIBUTE TO BOB VAN HEUVELEN

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to my chief of staff upon his retirement from the U.S. Senate. Robert Van Heuvelen is recognized not only by me, but also by his colleagues and other Members, as a highly respected, effective, and engaging public servant.

Mr. Van Heuvelen has had a remarkable career in the Federal Government, spanning over 32 years. Bob first came to Capitol Hill in 1975 to work as a legislative assistant for the Honorable Quentin Burdick in the Senate. Following that, he served as assistant counsel for the Environment and Public Works Committee for the Honorable Edmund Muskie. He remained in Washington and went on to work as a Federal prosecutor at the U.S. Department of Justice, rising to the position of deputy and acting chief of the Department of Justice's environmental enforcement section, and eventually to director of the Office of Regulatory Enforcement at the Environmental Protection Agency.

For the past 10 years, I have been privileged to have Bob serve on my staff, first as policy director and then

as chief of staff. He brought with him extensive experience in Government and his lifelong dedication to our home State of North Dakota.

During his tenure in my office, some of his most notable accomplishments include coordinating disaster relief for the devastating 1997 flood of Grand Forks, spearheading the work of a tobacco task force to formulate a strong public health response to the tobacco settlements, fighting for a fair Medicare distribution formula and estate tax reform. He also made great strides in developing strong working relations with both his Democratic and Republican colleagues. Bob has helped organize monthly breakfasts, dinners, and policy meetings for chiefs of staff of both parties, fostering a sense of bipartisanship, an accomplishment which is truly praiseworthy.

Bob is a native of Bismarck, ND. He earned his bachelor's degree at Macalester College in Minnesota. Following that, he attended the University of Minnesota, where he received his master's degree in public policy, and George Washington University, where he received his juris doctor. Today, Bob and his wife of 30 years, Jane Sherburne, live in Bethesda, MD. They have three wonderful children—Ben, Elizabeth, and Will.

As Bob goes forward in his life and on to other endeavors, I hope that he proudly looks back at his time here on Capitol Hill and realizes the tremendous difference he has made for North Dakota, our Nation, and in the lives of so many people. I am honored to have had the pleasure to work with him and look forward to our ongoing friendship. We have had great fun doing the Nation's business, and I will miss him. I commend Bob for his many achievements and superior service and wish him the very best.

IN RECOGNITION OF VASILIKI CHRISTOPOULOS

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, today I wish to express Kathy's and my greatest admiration and thanks for a person who over the past 14 years has been the heart and soul of my Washington staff. Vasiliki Alexopoulos Christopoulos has served as my administrative assistant since February 2001 and before that as my legislative director, director of appropriations and as a legislative assistant. From her first days when she began working with us during our 1992 Senate campaign, Kathy and I knew Vas was an extraordinary person.

To describe Vas simply as AA does not do her justice—although that job is at the center of a well-run and effective Washington office and is critical to the success of a Senator. She, rather, has been the heartbeat of the office. Her caring, warm, and always positive personality calms the stormy times and has given all of us a shot of energy when we needed a lift. Vas understands that running an office is more than assigning tasks. Under her leadership, it

has been about building an exceptional team. She always makes sure that when there is a task to be done, it is not left to one person; rather, everyone jumps in with Vas leading the way.

Whether it is counseling interns through separation anxieties, interviewing people to join the office, or assisting Kathy, me, and our children in making sense out of this chaotic lifestyle, Vas has always organized, planned, and followed through in a manner that has led to a successful end in a positive way.

Walking with Vas to get a cup of coffee is like taking a field trip. This is no police officer, no maintenance staff, no congressional staff who does not know Vas and want to share a story. One quickly learns that everyone in Washington is Greek.

Vas could do about anything she wishes, including probably be mayor of Nashua, but she has chosen a different course. She is moving from the friendly confines of Washington and Nashua to the cold, barren land of Grand Rapids, MI. Michigan, where the summer occurs on July 4, will be the better for this. She will bring her sunny personality which will inevitably warm even the chill climate of Michigan.

As Vas and her terrific husband Jimmy embark on this new career path and challenge, seeking all things Greek, Kathy joins me in thanking her for all her years of dedication to the Gregg family, our office staff, and all the people of New Hampshire. We have all greatly benefited from her commitment and love. She has been and will remain a part of our family and although she will be a bit further away, we wish her only the best and say thank you.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

HONORING REYNOLDS, NORTH DAKOTA

• Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, today I recognize a community in North Dakota that will be celebrating its anniversary. On July 27–29, the residents of Reynolds will gather to celebrate their community's history and founding.

Reynolds is a vibrant community located in eastern North Dakota. Founded in 1880, years before North Dakota was granted statehood, Reynolds was named for Dr. Henry A. Reynolds, who served as a surgeon in the Civil War and had recently migrated to the area from Maine. Reynolds, like many other North Dakota communities, was originally incorporated with the arrival of the railroad.

Reynolds is now, and always has been, a very unique community. The city itself has two churches, two elevators, and is separated by two counties. The number two is very important to the residents of Reynolds, and celebrating its quasiquicentennial 2 years late is, as the community says, kind of a "Reynoldsism."

Today, Reynolds has much to celebrate. Its 125th+2 celebration will be an event worth taking in. Festivities will include a steak fry, parade, street fair, alumni baseball game, fireworks, and much more.

I ask the Senate to join me in congratulating Reynolds, ND, and its residents on their first 127 years and in wishing them well in the future. By honoring Reynolds and all the other historic small towns of North Dakota, we keep the great pioneering frontier spirit alive for future generations. It is places such as Reynolds that have helped to shape this country into what it is today, which is why this fine community is deserving of our recognition.

Reynolds has a proud past and a bright future.●

TRIBUTE TO BERNARD WOODARD

● Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, today I celebrate the life and mourn the recent passing, of a great Texan, Thurmond Bernard Woodard. Mr. Woodard recently lost a courageous battle with cancer, a foe he had been battling since 2005.

Born on January 9, 1949, in Ocala, FL, Thurmond Woodard learned the importance of family at an early age. His childhood and adolescence were marked by the qualities that would later endear him to all—strong will, strong character, and uncompromising integrity. He went on to earn a bachelor's degree in accounting from Hampton University and then embarked on a storied career in finance, marketing, sales, and human-resources management.

In October 2000, Woodard was serving as president and chief operating officer for Roosevelt Thomas Consulting and Training in Atlanta. In that role, he spent his days advising the company on the importance and necessity of integrating diversity within business strategies. Recognizing his talent and vision, Austin-based Dell Inc. decided to try and lure him away by offering him the job of vice president for global diversity and chief ethics, privacy, and compliance officer. Thankfully for Dell, he accepted the offer and never looked back. He held those positions until his death in April.

Known for his dedication to creating cultures of dignity, respect, and inclusion, Thurmond promoted the importance of leadership through creating opportunity for all. "We cannot resist change that is inevitable," he said. "We have to get on board and help drive that change."

That eloquence earned him the admiration of his colleagues, including Dell's chief executive Michael Dell who said, "His sensible counsel, generosity of spirit, tireless dedication, and optimism were appreciated and admired by all he touched. His passing leaves a void impossible to fill."

That void is seen not only at Dell but also in the many Texas communities in which he had a profound impact. Even

in the difficult stages of his illness, he served as deacon and Sunday school teacher at the David Chapel Missionary Baptist Church in downtown Austin. His work as a mentor and community activist was recognized last year when the Austin Area Urban League honored him with the Whitney M. Young Jr. Award for his efforts to promote diversity through the strengthening of business and community partnerships.

Thurmond's impact could also be seen in our Nation's Capitol, where he served as a board member of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation and was the key architect of the foundation's AVOICE virtual library on the history of African Americans in Congress. Other organizations that continue to benefit from his efforts and generosity in Washington include the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute's Center for Latino Leadership and Operation Hope's financial literacy center in Anacostia.

Dell will honor his legacy of outreach by endowing a scholarship in his name for students of color and students from disadvantaged economic backgrounds around the world.

Even though he was known for being an incredibly successful businessman and community leader, Thurmond was known first as an incredibly successful family man. A beloved father and husband, he leaves behind his wonderful wife of 37 years Suzanne, his children Michelynn and Derek, and countless friends. They recall with fondness Thurmond's love of humor, friendship, and the occasional round of golf.

He lived life with vigor, passion, and unwavering optimism. And even though he has been called home to God, Thurmond's selflessness and decency will always serve to guide and inspire us all.

Mr. President, please join me in celebrating the life of Thurmond Bernard Woodard.●

RETIREMENT OF DALE W. SOPPER

● Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, today we recognize a distinguished executive at the Social Security Administration, Dale W. Sopper. Dale is the Deputy Commissioner for Budget, Finance and Management. He is a dedicated public servant who has served his country in public service for 42 years.

A native of Allentown, PA, he began his Federal career as a claims insurance specialist in the local Social Security Office in Kansas City, MO. After 2 years, he was selected for the Management Intern Program at the then-Department of Health, Education and Welfare. He served in a number of increasingly responsible positions there and in the Department of Health and Human Services over the next 16 years, ultimately serving as HHS' Assistant Secretary for Management and Budget.

Dale returned to the Social Security Administration in 1983 as the Deputy Associate Commissioner for Management, Budget and Personnel. In his

current position as Deputy Commissioner for Budget, Finance and Management, Dale is responsible for providing executive leadership and direction in administering: a comprehensive financial program of budget policy, formulation and execution; accounting policy and operations; the agency's acquisition and grants program; audit resolution and liaison; the internal controls program; agencywide facilities and publications management programs; and the agency's efforts to improve annual wage reporting and wage reconciliation activities. In addition, Dale serves as SSA's chief financial officer, senior procurement executive and principal deputy ethics counselor.

During Dale's long and distinguished career with both agencies, he has received many awards—of special note, the Presidential Rank Awards for Distinguished Executive and Meritorious Executive, the Donald Scantlebury Memorial Award, the Elmer Staats Award and the Frank Greathouse Distinguished Leadership Award.

Dale will retire from the Social Security Administration on August 3, 2007. He is an exceptional career executive who has consistently demonstrated strength, integrity, diligence and a relentless commitment to public service and the well-being of our citizens across the Nation. Through his extraordinary leadership and achievements, he has inspired countless men and women with whom he has worked over these past 42 years.

It is important that we in Congress recognize the many men and women who devote their working lives to improve the lives of others. Career civil servants often do their work in quiet anonymity behind the scenes providing vital service to the American people. They are rarely recognized for their important contribution. Dale Sopper is one of those people. His record of leadership at the Social Security Administration and his commitment to providing the American people with effective and compassionate service is a record of which he can be justly proud.

I wish Dale all the best in his retirement from Federal service and thank him for his many years of dedicated service.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Evans, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations and a treaty which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)